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DEAF SERVICES COMMISSION OF IOWA

Commission Meeting
Saturday, May 3, 2014
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
2600 E. Euclid
Des Moines, IA
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The DSCI Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Theresa Legg at 10:02 a.m.

Members present: Theresa Legg, Mark Hersch, Tina Kastendieck, Martha Meyer and Bob Vizzini

Members absent: Nathaniel Garrels and Jennifer Keaton

Staff members present: Heidi Smith, Administrator, CAS Division, Jill Fulitano Avery, Executive Officer, Office of Deaf Services, and Stephanie Lyons, Disability Consultant and Linda Scott

Staff members absent: San Wong, Director, IA Department of Human Rights, *Ex-Officio* and Lysie Hanssen, Disability Consultant

Interpreters: Susan Hardine, Renee Johnson, Stephanie Raymie and Jeff Reese

Commissioners, staff and interpreters were introduced, visitors recognized and ground rules for the meeting established.

Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2014:

MOTION #14-07: Vizzini pointed out that on the bottom of Page 2, the sentence should read that the letter should be sent to the Board of Regents rather than the search committee. There being no further additions or corrections to the minutes, motion to approve minutes as presented with corrections. **Kastendieck/Vizzini** All in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner/Committee Reports:

Culturally Affirmative Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Aftercare Services: No report.

Accessible Legal Representation:

Kastendieck spent a couple of months visiting with the hospital and clinics around her area to make sure they have posted, and are actively sharing, the information that if interpreters are needed, it would be at no cost to the patient. She's found that everyone seems to be complying. The issue is with the smaller communities and rural facilities and she thinks it's because they're not associated with a large group like Unity Point. Right now she's making notes and asking questions.

Hersch informed the commission that Unity Point has a new director of interpreter services. There's been positive feedback from the community on the change.

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VRiowa is beginning to put equipment in different hospitals in eastern Iowa. They've found that hospitals are not a huge barrier to them because of mandates put upon the hospitals, but they are finding that EMT services don't want anything to do with them. He thinks that's because it's not mandated that they provide effective interpretation in the ambulance or the field and they're overwhelmed with the equipment they already have in the squad. Therefore, it would appear that a person who is deaf will not have access to VRiowa or interpreter services until they reach the hospital.

Licensed Sign Language Interpreters Meeting Competency Standards: No report.

Hersch and Kastendieck had had a side conversation before the meeting on interpreter shortages in school districts – especially rural schools. There seems to be a shortage of people able to interpret in any way with a child. Kastendieck's concern as an administrator is that the school district is subject to a lawsuit because they are mandated under several different laws at the federal and state level to provide mainstreaming and local interpreter services. How do we, then, dragoon interpreters into living in a rural situation and work for a school district when there's a shortage of qualified interpreters state-wide?

Discussion took place on the subject and Smith felt that the only way around it would be to create a bill or some sort of legislation where you are incentivizing people to stay in the state. Something that encourages them to get their interpreter's license and to stay in Iowa for a set number of years and by doing so, that interpreter would get part of their tuition repaid.

Right now there is no one in the legislature that we know of who is hard of hearing or deaf, but we do have an advocate in Rep. Kevin Koester out of Ankeny, IA and he has talked with her about video relay in the Capitol. Smith suggested that the commission invite Rep. Koester to the next meeting or before the next session begins, to talk with him about issues of the deaf and hard of hearing. Smith will make the effort to invite Rep. Koester to the next meeting. However, she asked that the commission begin thinking about things they would like to talk with him about. Be sure, however, to make his time with us worthwhile. Kastendieck wanted to make sure each commissioner was aware of his coming so that one of the commissioners on each of the three (3) committees could prepare some kind of presentation for him to really talk about things that need to be addressed in each of the categories.

Vizzini would like the commission to think about a couple of things: 1) that we ask legislators to establish an interpreter's training program at the Bachelor level because community college is not enough. There have been community colleges that have now closed their interpreter training programs; 2) have an interpreter on the commission that would know about the certification process. Can we suggest that it be discussed at the next meeting?

Lyons felt the commission could approach ISRID to see if they could send a representative to the commission meeting and it might be possible that they could recommend someone apply to become a commissioner. Smith thought it might be possible to use a licensed interpreter in an ex-officio role where they could attend the meetings and report on activities, shortages,

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etc. They could be part of the agenda as a standing report until an opening comes up for a commissioner who is hearing.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Old Business:

Staff Reports: Smith, Avery and Lyons updated the commission on activities and projects they had been working since the past commission meeting in February.

Lyons asked for a volunteer to write an article for the next E-News. Vizzini will write the article with deadline date of May 29-30.

Contractual Interpreting Program Funds for FY14: To date, \$4,961.50 has been expended from the original \$5,000.00 in contractual funds for FY2014, leaving a balance of \$38.50. This past quarter, there were five (5) requests for funerals and three (3) weddings for the period January 18-June 30, 2014 with \$1,156.50 paid out for these requests. April 2, 2014, interpreters and interpreting companies were informed that there was no more money in the fund until the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 for the FY2015.

For this next fiscal year, July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015, the department will continue to allow \$150.00 per request until the money runs out.

New Business:

Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

MOTION #14-08: Motion to nominate Legg as Chair for the next term. Legg accepted the nomination. **Vizzini/Hersch** All in favor, motion carried.

MOTION #14-09: Motion to nominate Vizzini as Vice Chair for the next term. Vizzini accepted the nomination. **Kastendieck/Hersch** All in favor, motion carried.

Yearly DSCI Meeting Schedule:

After discussion among commissioners, there was consensus that at least one of the meetings be an out-of-town meeting so that those in other communities could attend rather than having to drive a distance to attend one of the quarterly meetings here in central Iowa. Suggestions were Mason City, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque or Council Bluffs.

Because of budget constraints and the need to pay staff and interpreters to either travel early in the day to get to a destination or pay for an overnight stay, it was suggested that the commission keep this suggestion in mind for FY2016 when there may possibly be more money to travel and that it be scheduled for either the August 2015 or May 2016 meetings out-of-town in good weather.

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Commissioners asked Avery to take a look at the calendar for the next fiscal year and come up with available dates, schedule the quarterly meetings close to those of FY14 and advise the commission by e-mail.

Announcements:

Vizzini wanted to discuss Deaf Awareness Week and the Governor's Proclamation for the fall of 2014. Because it was not an agenda item, it would have to be added to the August 2014 meeting agenda to be brought up at that time. Avery will see that it's added to the agenda

Vizzini announced that the University of Iowa will again be holding Deaf Appreciation Week September 21-27, 2014. Invitations will be going out soon with the possibly of a panel being put together to touch upon interpreting issues, deaf children in schools and their struggles, etc. Watch for informational piece on this upcoming event.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Theresa Legg, Chair

Linda Scott, Secretary